

Quick Facts

About...Vibriosis

What is vibriosis?

Vibriosis (vib-ree-OH-sis) is an infection caused by *Vibrio* bacteria. These bacteria are found in watery environments, especially in brackish saltwater, and naturally inhabit coastal waters in the United States and Canada. *Vibrio* bacteria are present in higher concentrations in the environment during summer. These bacteria can cause gastrointestinal illness and skin infections. Infection can be mild to severe or even fatal, especially those with weakened immune systems.

How is vibriosis spread?

Most people become infected with vibriosis by eating raw or undercooked shellfish, particularly oysters and other shellfish found in warm coastal waters, during the summer months. Since the bacteria are naturally found in warm ocean waters, people with open wounds can be infected with *Vibrios* through direct contact with seawater or through a wound from something exposed to seawater, such as rocks or shells. There is no evidence for person-to-person transmission of vibriosis.

What are the symptoms of vibriosis?

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (sometimes watery)
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Fever
- Chills

Symptoms usually begin 12 to 24 hours (range of 4 to 96 hours) after a person becomes infected and usually last from 2 to 10 days.

In immunocompromised persons, particularly those with chronic liver disease, certain kinds of *Vibrio* bacteria can cause severe or fatal infection, including sepsis (bloodstream infection).

How do I know if I have vibriosis?

A person with diarrhea that lasts more than 24 hours should consult a health care provider. The health care provider may collect a stool sample and test for *Vibrio* bacteria. Anyone who has a wound that shows signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, pain, and drainage, should also consult a health care provider.

How can vibriosis be treated?

Most people recover from *Vibrio* gastroenteritis without specific medical treatment. Treatment that is given is based on relieving symptoms and preventing dehydration. Some *Vibrio* infections require certain antibiotics to resolve infection. Your health care provider can decide if antibiotics are needed. One out of five patients with vibriosis requires hospitalization.

Is vibriosis a reportable disease?

Yes. Health care providers and laboratories must report cases of vibriosis to the local health department (LHD) or the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) within 72 hours of diagnosis. The LHD will contact all cases diagnosed with *Vibrio* so a possible exposure can be determined to help prevent others from becoming ill.

How is vibriosis prevented?

- Eat safe foods and drink safe water (Remember: Contaminated foods may look and smell normal):
 - Use treated water for washing, cooking, and drinking.
 - Wash all produce before eating raw or cooking.
 - Do not eat uncooked or undercooked shellfish or fish, including ceviche.
 - Avoid swallowing untreated water from recreational areas, such as oceans, lakes, etc.
- Protect others:
 - Persons with diarrhea and/or vomiting shall be excluded from employment involving food handling (Indiana Retail Food Establishment Sanitation Requirements, 410 IAC 7-24-122).
 - Do not change diapers near recreational water.
 - Do not go swimming or use hot tubs if you have diarrhea for at least 2 weeks after diarrhea stops.
- Treat wounds properly by washing with soap and water as soon as possible and applying a waterproof bandage. See a health care provider if signs of infection develop.
- Safe travel outside of the United States:
 - Drink bottled beverages and water, even when brushing teeth.
 - Do not consume local water or ice.
 - Do not eat uncooked fruits or vegetables unless you peel them yourself.
 - Do not eat foods or beverages from street vendors.
 - Do not bring raw produce or shellfish back into the United States.

Where can I learn more about vibriosis?

To search Indiana data and statistics:

www.in.gov/isdh/dataandstats/disease/diseases_index.htm

To search disease information:

http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/dfbmd/disease_listing/vibriop_gi.html

http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/dfbmd/disease_listing/vibriov_gi.html

To search for national data, statistics, and outbreaks:

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/

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